日高ショーコ
SHOKO HIDAKA PRESENTS

scene.24
40page

憂鬱な朝

A classic romance woven around a young viscount and his beautiful butler.

Various [illegible] whirl on [illegible] night...

For Akihito's sake, Katsuragi will cut the Joker...?*

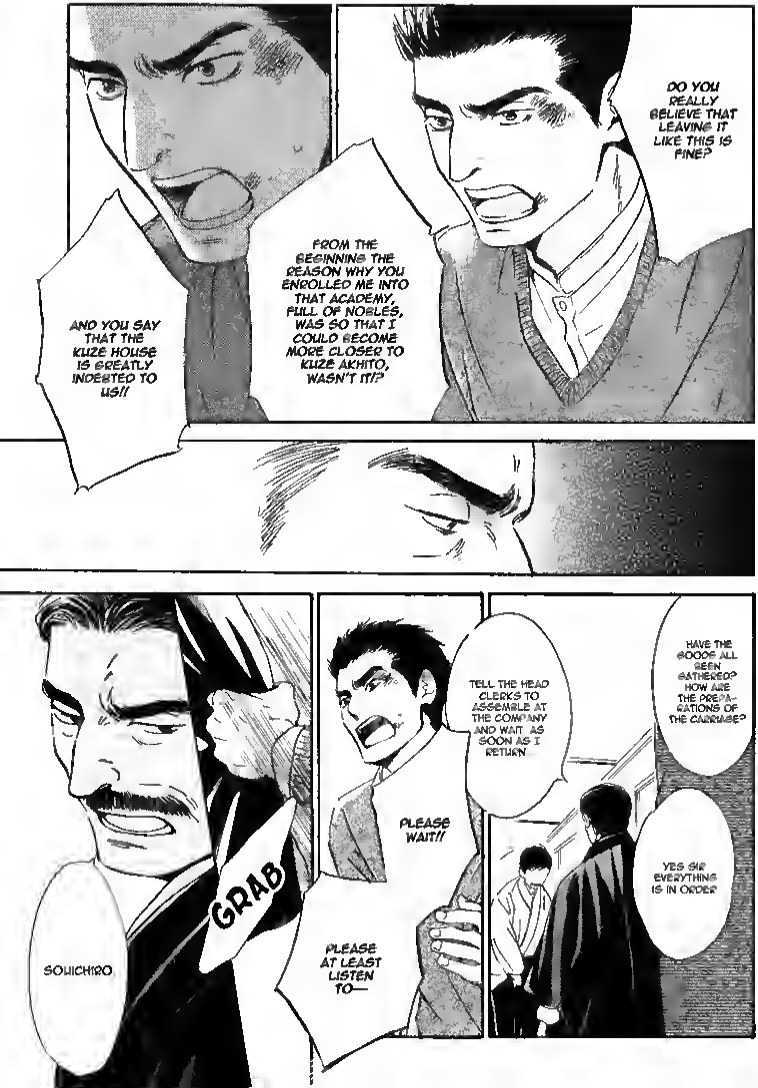
NEWS
ドラマCD「憂鬱な朝3」絶賛発売中!
CAST 羽多野渉(久世暁人) 平川大輔(吉木晴之)
前野智昭(石崎聡一郎) 他
3(150円(税込) 発売/マリン エンタテインメント

NOW ON SALE
1.コミックス既刊「憂鬱な朝1~3」
2.ドラマCD「憂鬱な朝1~2」
2枚 2,500円(税込) 発売/マリン エンタテインメント

EXCUSE ME.
OPEN
.....
SO IT IS YOU SOUICHIROU.
WHAT IS IT?
.....
THERE IS SOMETHING I WISH TO ASK OF YOU FATHER
PLEASE IF YOU COULD SPARE SOME TIME

RISE
FATHER!
COME AGAIN AT A DIFFERENT TIME
I CAN'T
DON'T YOU SEE THAT WE'RE MAKING PREPA-RATIONS RIGHT NOW?
LATELY YOU HAVEN'T BEEN AT HOME VERY OFTEN HAVE YOU?
I CAN NOT LET THIS OPPOR-TUNITY RUN AWAY FROM ME
KUZE
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME SAY THAT I'M ABOUT TO LEAVE?
THERE IS SOMETHING I MUST SAY ABOUT THE KUZE HOUSE!!

UP TO NOW, I-
HAVE NEVER OPPOSED YOU NOR HAVE I EVER ASKED ANYTHING OF YOU.
BECAUSE I KNEW THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE USELESS!
HOWEVER THIS TIME I WILL NOT YIELD, NO MATTER WHAT!!
WON'T YOU BE SILENT?
THIS HAS NO CONNECTION WITH YOU
IF YOU ARE SPEAKING AS THE VISCOUNT KUZE'S "FRIEND" THEN...
THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY BECAUSE FROM NOW ON THE HEAD OF THE KUZE HOUSE WILL NO LONGER BE AKIHITO-KUN
MOREOVER KATSURAGI ALREADY BELONGS TO THIS HOUSE DO NOT GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT HOUSE'S STRIFE.
step
step
FATHER!!

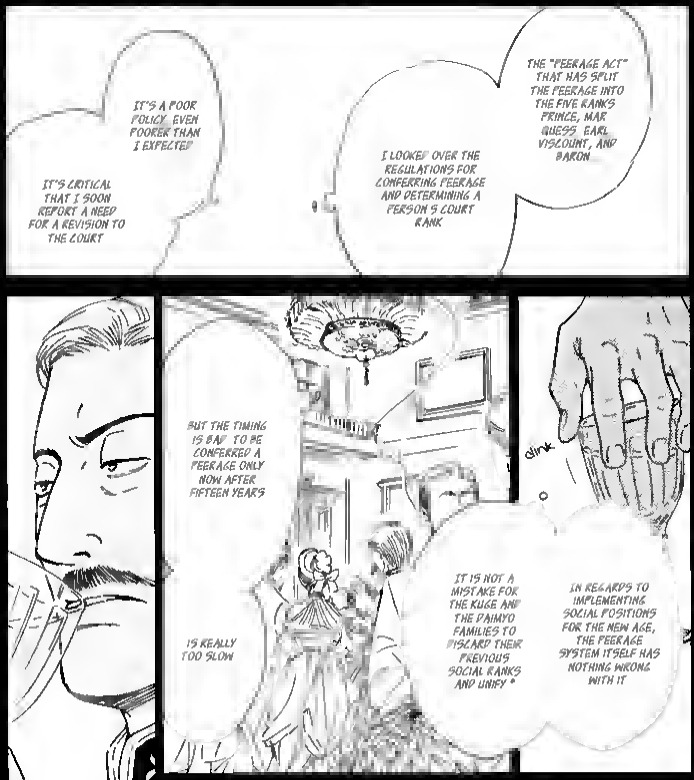

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT LEAVING IT LIKE THIS IS FINE?
FROM THE BEGINNING THE REASON WHY YOU ENROLLED ME INTO THAT ACADEMY, FULL OF NOBLES, WAS SO THAT I COULD BECOME MORE CLOSER TO KUZE AKHITO, WASN'T IT!?
AND YOU SAY THAT THE KUZE HOUSE IS GREATLY INDEBTED TO US!!
HAVE THE GOODS ALL BEEN GATHERED? HOW ARE THE PREPA-RATIONS OF THE CARRIAGE?
TELL THE HEAD CLERKS TO ASSEMBLE AT THE COMPANY AND WAIT AS SOON AS I RETURN
YES SIR EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER
PLEASE WAIT!!
GRAB
SOUICHIRO
PLEASE AT LEAST LISTEN TO—

ARE YOU IN ANY POSITION TO SPEAK AGAINST ME!?
LET GO OF ME!!
KNEEL
PLEASE I BEG OF YOU!!
MY DEAR FRIEND KUZE AKINTO...
PLEASE DO NOT ABANDON HIM.
GRIP
I DON'T WANT TO

PLEASE!!
IF IT'S LIKE THAT THEN COME WITH ME
EH?
GOOD GRIEF
I'LL LISTEN TO YOU INSIDE THE CARTABE
EH..?
WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU TAKING ME FOR?
EH?
stef
stef

EXACTLY WHERE ARE WE GOING..
FA...
FATHER!!
.....
HAVE YOU STILL NOT LEARNED HOW TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE, NOT EVEN A LITTLE?
WE ARE GOING TO THE MARQUESS MORIYAMA'S RESIDENCE
YOU WANT TO SAVE AKHITO-KUN, DON'T YOU?

25 YEARS AGO——


THE "PEERAGE ACT" THAT HAS SPLIT THE PEERAGE INTO THE FIVE RANKS PRINCE, MARQUESS, EARL VISCOUNT, AND BARON
I LOOKED OVER THE REGULATIONS FOR CONFERRING PEERAGE AND DETERMINING A PERSON'S COURT RANK
IT'S A POOR POLICY. EVEN POORER THAN I EXPECTED
IT'S CRITICAL THAT I SOON REPORT A NEED FOR A REVISION TO THE COURT
BUT THE TIMING IS BAD. TO BE CONFERRED A PEERAGE ONLY NOW AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS
IS REALLY TOO SLOW
IT IS NOT A MISTAKE FOR THE KUGE AND THE DAIMYO FAMILIES TO DISCARD THEIR PREVIOUS SOCIAL RANKS AND UNIFY.
IN REGARDS TO IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL POSITIONS FOR THE NEW AGE, THE PEERAGE SYSTEM ITSELF HAS NOTHING WRONG WITH IT
clink

hmph
walkwalk
walkwalk
walkwalk
...BECAUSE IT'S NOT AS IF THE PEERAGE ACT WAS FORMED TO REVIVE THE FAMILY STATUSES FROM ANCIENT TIMES
HENCE THIS RECENT DECREE RULES FOR LOWER CLASS SHIZOKU* LIKE ME TO BE BESTOWED WITH THE PEERAGE OF "NEW NOBILITY"
DISSATISFACTION IS INEVITABLE
THE DISTINGUISHED FAMILIES OF THE LORDS WILL BECOME THE "OLD NOBILITY" SO THE DISCONTENT WILL SURELY CEASE FOR NOW *
SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
AFTER ALL THE KUGE HOUSES DON'T HAVE MONEY
I SUPPOSE WE'LL INCREASE THE GRANTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THEN SELL THE FAVOURS...
MARQUESS MORIYAMA
IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME.
step
!

*T/N SHIZOKU (士族) or "warrior families" is a social class distinct from the Kazoku/Peerage and from Heimin/commoners. It's mostly made up of former samurai. Some shizoku were also conferred a peerage depending on their services.

..KUZE AKINAO
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE CONFERRED A PEERAGE. IT SURPRISED ME.
SINCE I ASSUMED THAT MY SUCCESSION TO THE PEERAGE WOULD HAPPEN FIRST
..MY FATHER IS TENACIOUS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS.
WHAT WIND BLEW YOU HERE FOR? YOU TO WISH TO TALK TO ME?
WASN'T IT YOU WHO REFUSED AND RESENTED THE LOWER CLASS SHIZOKU AND THOSE OF THE SAME RANK?
AT THAT TIME I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THE RANK OF MY HOUSE COULD DIFFER THIS MUCH
THAT I OF THE KUZE HOUSE, WHO IS FROM A NOBLE FAMILY COULD POSSIBLY ONLY BE A "VISCOUNT"!
MY FATHER WAS REALLY TOO FOOLISH TO HAVE ACCEPTED THAT TITLE, EVEN SO..

THIS IS COMPLETELY WITHOUT MY AGREEMENT!
WHAT DO YOU, MARQUESS MORIYAMA, THINK OF THIS MATTER OF FAMILY STATUS!!
I APPROVE OF THE TRADITIONAL ONE BODY SYSTEM CREATED AFTER THE MEIJI RESTORATION HOWEVER...
THE ALLOTMENT OF THE FIVE RANKS IS DEFINITELY AN INJUSTICE TO THE EXTREME!"
FURTHERMORE, THIS WAS ALL DECIDED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OR SUPERVISION OF ME AND THE REST OF THE OLD NOBILITY.
BY YOUR FATHER!
THAT... SOME-THING LIKE THAT IS...
YOU CANNOT DENY IT.
THERE ARE TWELVE SHIZOKU FROM YOUR CLAN WHO ARE NOW RANKED WITHIN THE PEERAGE, TWELVE!

YOU PRAISE THE MERITS OF THE REFORMATION, WHILE THE ONE WHO SHOULD'VE BEEN BESTOWED A COURT RANK BY THE GOVERNMENT IS THE PREVIOUS CABINET MINISTER MORIYAMA NOT, BY ANY MEANS, YOURSELF
MUCH LESS—
CLENCH
WHAT'S MORE IRRITATING THAN ANYTHING ELSE IS... THAT SOMEONE LIKE YOU, WHO HASN'T ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING, CAN SUCCEED THE PEERAGE AS IF IT WAS A MATTER OF COURSE
THE *MORIYAMA HOUSE*.

FOOLS WHO CLING ONTO THEIR PAST HONOUR!!
YOU BASTARDS ALL ARE.
COMPARED TO US, YOU BASTARDS ARE...
THE MORIYAMA HOUSE IS A NEW HOUSE OF THE NEW AGE...
rile
rile
rile
rile
...WHAT ARE... YOU TRYING TO SAY...
step
CAMMATION
ONE DAY—!
ONE DAY, THERE WILL DEFINITELY COME A TIME WHEN YOU WILL REGRET LOOKING DOWN ON ME.*
IN THIS PRESENT, WITH THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE HAN SYSTEM, ALL OF YOU LORDS ARE LIKE TRASH.

HOW UNSIGHTLY
.....
...YOU PEOPLE OF THE KUZE HOUSE...
ARE ALL THE SAME

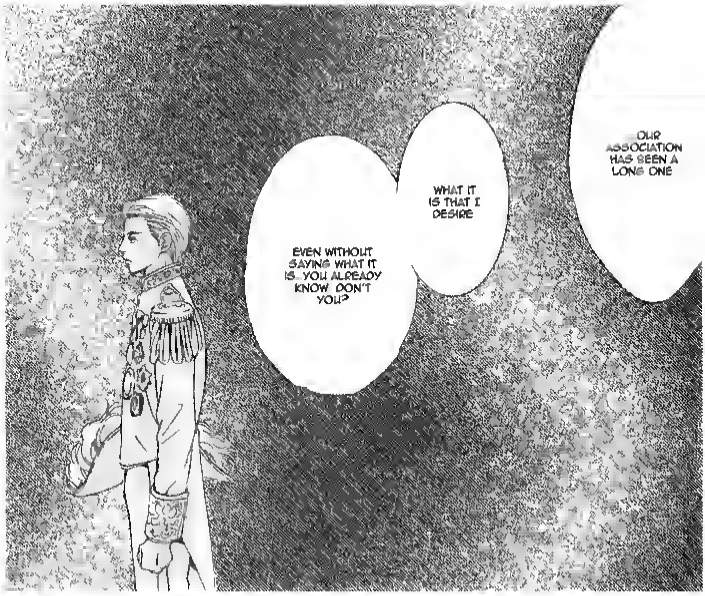
ANNOYING...
IRRITATING AND ALWAYS PRETENTIOUS...!
.....
MARQUESS YOUR EXCELLENCY
DOES YOUR EXCELLENCY REMEMBER THE DAY WHEN YOU FIRST MET ME?

IT WAS BACK WHEN AKINAO-SAMA HAD LEFT THE MAIN KUZE HOUSE AND WAS LIVING A QUIET LIFE IN KAMAKURA.
I WAS STILL 14 YEARS OLD... WHILE COMMUTING BACK AND FORTH TO THE ACADEMY, I WAS ALSO SHOWING MY FACE HERE AND THERE AS THE KUZE HOUSE'S REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE TIME, MAR-QUESS MORI-YAMA— YOU CALLED OUT TO ME
YOU SAID "SO THE DISTINGUISHED FAMILIES ARE MASQUERADING AS THE IN-FASHION NOUVEAU RICHE?"

*Kabutocho (兜町) is the largest financial district in Japan, as well as where the headquarters of the Tokyo Stock Exchange are located.

AND THEN I...
I NEEDED "AUTHORITY"
A MIGHTY AUTHORITY IN ORDER TO DETHRONE THE LEGITIMATE HEIR AND TO SEIZE THE POSITION AS HEAD OF THE KUZE HOUSE
.....
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE FIRST TIME WE TRAVELLED TOGETHER TO KABUTO-CHO?
BACK THEN, YOU WERE IN NEED OF A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY
MONEY TO SILENCE THE NASHING OLD NOBILITY AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS

NO
AS I TOLD YOU JUST NOW IT NO LONGER MATTERS.
ON NO ACCOUNT CAN I CONTINUE TO SERVE YOU FOR THE SAKE OF MY SELF-INTERESTS.
.....
THAT WISH WILL SOON COME TRUE
I'VE ALREADY AWOKEN FROM MY DREAM
I WISH TO REQUEST ALL THE COMPENSATION DUE TO ME FOR EVERYTHING I HAVE DONE FOR YOU UP TO NOW
THEREFORE, TONIGHT I'VE COME TO SQUARE ACCOUNTS
THIS IS THE LAST TIME THAT I WILL COME TO TALK WITH YOUR EXCELLENCY AS AN INDIVIDUAL, PRIVATELY


OUR ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN A LONG ONE
WHAT IT IS THAT I DESIRE
EVEN WITHOUT SAYING WHAT IT IS, YOU ALREADY KNOW, DON'T YOU?

YOUR EXCELLENCY
AKIHITO-SAMA IS STILL ONLY 15 YEARS OLD

.....
I WON'T FORGIVE THAT BOY, YOU KNOW
EVEN IF YOU CUT OPEN YOUR STOMACH

IF YOU ENACT RETRIBUTION, IT WILL BE KNOWN AS THE FOOLISH MOVE THAT MADE MARQUESS MORIYAMA'S REPUTATION FALL TO THE GROUND
IN ANY CASE AKIHITO-SAMA IS THE TOP STUDENT AT HIS ACADEMY
AS AN INEXPERIENCED YOUTH HIS OUTLOOK IS NARROW——
HOWEVER I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT HE IS SOMEONE WHO WILL FOR HIS COUNTRY STAND STRONG IN PUBLIC DUTY
THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT IS OF COURSE ALSO AWARE OF THAT TO AROUSH SUCH GREATNESS CAN BE RUMOURED TO BE AN ACT OF TREASON AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT
KUNAISHOU ... Ministry of the Imperial Household, managing imperial affairs and finances.
WHAT IDIOCY...
OR... WHAT IF SOMEONE WAS ON THE VERGE OF REPORTING TO THE THRONE THAT THE REAL REASON BEHIND BREAKING OFF THE ONCE ADVANCING TALKS OF ENGAGEMENT WAS...
THE MAN ACTING AS GUARDIAN HAD,
AGAINST THAT KIND OF OUTSTANDING TALENT——

HOLD
"FOR THE SAKE OF HIS SELFISH PERSONAL INTERESTS, SPLIT THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE APART" AND SO ON. WHAT IF I SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
TOHKE
SINCE AFTER ALL THERE ARE MANY OF THOSE WHO YOUR EXCELLENCY HOLDS DISSATISFACTION AGAINST THE OLD NOBILITY, WE COULD SPREAD IT IN A FLASH——
SO INTO WHOSE EARS SHALL WE SEND THIS TALK?
NO ONE IS EXPECTING THE "TRUTH". IT'S ONLY ABOUT WHAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC PREFERS AND DOESN'T PREFER
THAT WAS THE DOING OF KUZE AKINTO.

ARE YOU AWARE THAT TONIGHT THERE ARE MANY REPORTERS OUTSIDE OF YOUR GATE?
AND FROM THERE ON IT'LL SURELY REACH THE EARS OF THE GOVERNMENT, NO?
IT'LL CIRCULATE TO THE INTERESTED PARTY THE DUKE SAJYOU HOUSE
(Quiver)
(Quiver)
YOU BASTARD. JUST WHAT EXACTLY
IS THE "COMPENSATION" YOU DESIRE?
YOU SCOUNDREL.

click
click
click
THEY'RE SLOW
murmur
AFTER ALL, VISCOUNT AKIHITO IS SOMEONE WHO YOU WOULDN'T THINK WAS ALMOST A NOBLE. AN ECCENTRIC.
Since long ago—
I've been hated by him
rustle
AS I THOUGHT
WILL THINGS ALL GO ACCORDING TO KATSURAGI'S PLAN?
"REALLY THAT AKIHITO-SAMA, HE—"

"HE DOESN'T HAVE THE SELF-AWARENESS NEEDED BY A HEAD OF THE FAMILY."
"NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I TELL HIM THAT HE MUST OBEY ME UNTIL HE BECOMES OF AGE, HE DOESN'T LISTEN."
"SHIGEYUKI-SAMA, THIS ISN'T SOMETHING TO LAUGH ABOUT."
"EVEN THOUGH HE'S ALREADY 15-"
"AGAIN AND AGAIN,"
CHUCKLE
"HE DOESN'T DO THINGS ACCORDING TO MY EXPECTATIONS."
SAIONJI-DONO?
OH NO
I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW TAKAKO IS DOING IN OUR MANSION
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

APPARENTLY IN THE EVENT OF MY SUCCESSION, CONGRATULATIONS WILL BE GIVEN THROUGH THE GIFTING OF A NEW MANSION
SINCE MY MOTHER-IN-LAW, KAYOKO-SAMA'S FAMILY ARE VERY WEALTHY MERCHANTS IN NIHONBASHI.*
YES
BUT SHIGEYUKI-SAMA, ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME FOR YOU TO HAVE HEAD TALK OF YOU SUCCEEDING THE PEERAGE SOON?
NO NO IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE PRINCESS YOU NEVER KNOW
WE ARE ALL LOOKING FORWARD TO THE BIRTH OF YOUR SON!
*NIHONBASHI (日本橋) is the business district of Tokyo.
FOR AS LONG AS WE LIVE, WE CANNOT LIFT OUR HEADS TO HIM
THAT WE, THE SAIONJI HOUSE, WHO'D BEEN IN SUCH A FORLORN, DISTRESSED STATE CAN NOW HAVE THIS PEACE IS ALL THANKS TO KATSURA!
whisper
EXCUSE MY INTERRUP-TION
IT'S JUST THAT WE'VE RECEIVED SOME INFORMATION FROM THE DOORMAN...
Is that fine?
Why not. Just pay him back!
Hmm.
SAIONJI-DONO

IS THAT SO?
INFORM MARQUESS MORIYAMA OF THIS AS WELL.
CERTAINLY
SAIONJI-DONO?
IT SEEMS THAT SOON FROM NOW, WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE AN UNUSUAL GUEST...
—WELL THEN
WILL EVERYTHING GO JUST AS KATSURAGI PLANNED?
snap
YOU WHO, FROM THE BEGINNING, WAS TROUBLED BY YOUR INABILITY TO KEEP YOUR COMPOSURE TOWARDS VISCOUNT AKIHITO
PROBABLY COULDN'T HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT

I—
CAN NO LONGER OBEY YOU ANYMORE.
KATSURAGI

I'M REALLY SUCH AN IDIOT AREN'T I...
.....
EVEN THOUGH IT'D BE GOOD ENOUGH TO JUST OBEDIENTLY BELIEVE IN KATSURAGI AND BE SATISFIED WITH KATSURAGI'S KINDNESS,
EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT DOING THAT ALONE WOULD MAKE ME INCREDIBLY HAPPY,
EVEN SO
...I CAN'T
"AKIHITO-SAMA"

"DURING NAOTSUGU-SAMA'S DEBUT TONIGHT, IF YOU PRESENT HIM TO EVERYONE AS"
"THE RECOMMENDATION OF BOTH HEADS OF HOUSES THE KUZE HOUSE AND THE KATSURAGI HOUSE, THEN THERE SHOULD BE NO OBJECTIONS"
IT'S NOT THAT
KATSURAGI WAS LYING

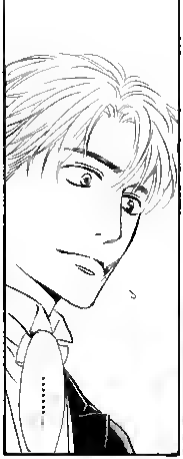
BUT I FEAR IT'S LIKELY THAT HE HASN'T REVEALED THE ENTIRE PLAN TO ME,
BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT IF HE DID, I'D OPPOSE IT
EVEN IF HE CONFESSES HIS LOVE TO ME, EVEN IF HE STAYS BY MY SIDE FOREVER
HIS CONVICTION WON'T WAVER

I, WHO SHOULD KNOW WHAT KIND OF MAN KATSURAGI IS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE...
WAS MADE HAPPY BY THE KIND WORDS THAT CAME FROM HIS LIPS. WORDS THAT I'VE ALWAYS LONGED TO HEAR
AND FORGOT ALL THAT

IT'S IRONIC...
SINCE IT'S THE CURRENT ME I UNDERSTAND
WHAT KATSUKAGI HAD SAID ABOUT THE KUZE HOUSE WAS, "THE TWO OF US WILL THINK OF A WAY"—
NAOTSUGU-SAMA WASN'T INCLUDED IN THAT.
"I MUST RAISE OUR COURT RANK—"
"IF THAT HAPPENS THEN FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, BY YOUR SIDE—"
KATSUKAGI'S WISH AND HIS FEELINGS TOWARDS ME.
IN THE END THEY WILL REACH A CONCLUSION THROUGH THESE TRANSACTIONS.
KATSUKAGI HAD ACCEPTED MY RETIREMENT.
IN THAT CASE THEN WHAT WAS HE THINKING—
AKIHITO-SAMA

I WONDER IF I MAY CALL YOU AKIHITO-SAMA,
PERHAPS "VISCOUNT KUZE" WOULD BE PREFERABLE?
Ah
!
AH...
NO
PLEASE "AKIHITO" IS...

I HEARD THAT AKIHITO-SAMA HAS ALREADY TURNED 18
SOW
I WONDER WHAT IT IS
HIS MANNER IS SOME-WHAT AMISS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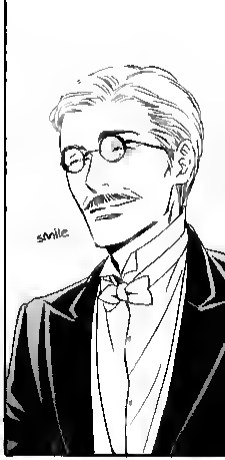
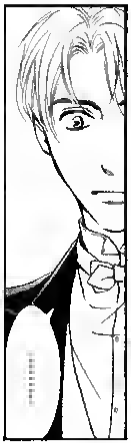
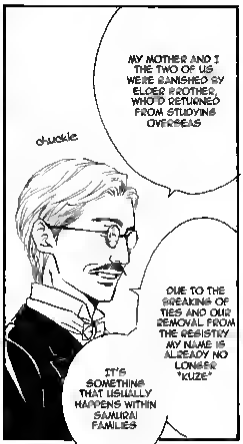

smile

WHEN I LEFT THE KUZE HOUSE I WAS A BIT OLDER THAN YOU THEN I THINK...
Exactly when was it I wonder...
AH
YES!

how cruel
THAT IS...
WELL...
I'M SORRY...
IT'S FINE
MY FATHER HAD...




chuckle
MY MOTHER AND I THE TWO OF US WERE BANISHED BY ELDER BROTHER, WHO'D RETURNED FROM STUDYING OVERSEAS
DUE TO THE BREAKING OF TIES AND OUR REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTRY MY NAME IS ALREADY NO LONGER "KUZE"
IT'S SOMETHING THAT USUALLY HAPPENS WITHIN SAMURAI FAMILIES

THAT SOMEONE OF THE KATSURAGI HOUSE WHO HAD SERVED THE KUZE HOUSE DURING THE FORMER CLAN PERIOD WAS SEARCHING FOR ME—
I WAS AWARE OF IT OF THIS RUMOUR
BUT I IGNORED IT AS SOON AS I HEARD IT I RAN AWAY
I NEVER HAD ANY DESIRE TO MAKE PUBLIC APPEARANCES ANYWAY
.....
clatter
PLEASE SIT DOWN
IT'S A CURIOUS THING
clatter
AND YET SOMEHOW I STILL ENDED UP HERE
THANK YOU
FROM A LONG TIME AGO, I DION'T LIKE SITTING ON SOFT SOFAS

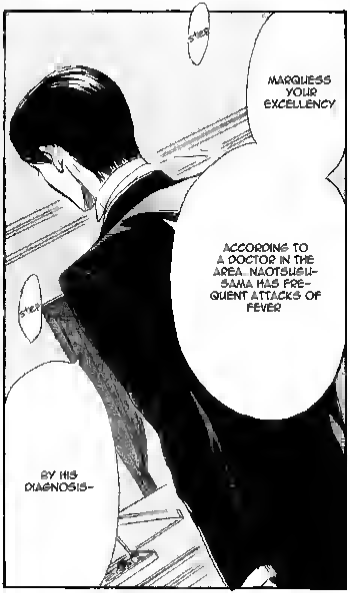
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING TO THE VERY END, I COULDN'T BECOME ONE OF THE KUZE HOUSE
THIS WESTERN-STYLE HOUSE THAT HAD UNDERGONE RECONSTRUCTION I COULDN'T TAKE TO IT
NO MATTER IF IT WAS A LUXURIOUS CHAIR, A LIFESTYLE THAT DIDN'T AGREE WITH ME.
THIS IS NOT A TALK ABOUT "BIRTH" OR "BREEDING".
I HAD AFTER ALL RECEIVED ALL THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS BEFIT ONE IN A SAMURAI FAMILY, ONE OF THE PEERAGE.
.....
Smile
SELF-AWARENESS WAS WHAT I LACKED I SUPPOSE

OLDER BROTHER WAS
A VERY SEVERE PERSON. BUT AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY HE WAS PERFECT. HE HAD THE POWER TO MAKE EVERYONE FOLLOW HIM.
NAOTSUGU-SAMA
HOWEVER I HAD NOT EVEN PIECES OF THAT DISPOSITION
THIS I WAS SELF-AWARE OF
THIS PERSON
EXACTLY WHAT IS HE TRYING TO
FOR WHAT REASONS WAS A PERSON LIKE ME CALLED TO COME HERE
AKIHITO-SAMA
THERE IS SOMETHING I WISH TO ASK OF YOU.
—HAS YOUR EXCELLENCY EVER MET AKINAO-SAMA'S YOUNGER BROTHER?

THE ONE WHO SAID THAT HE WAS A HINDRANCE TO BECOMING THE HEAD OF THE KUZE HOUSE WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?
KATSURAGI
DRIVING HIM OUT INTO THE OUTSKIRTS SO THAT HE WASN'T ALIVE BUT WASN'T KILLED EITHER THAT WAS YOUR WORK AS WELL
hmph
NOT THAT I KNOW OF
IF BY THE SMALLEST CHANCE THE HEIR KUZE AKIHITO DIED A PREMATURE DEATH
YOU'D USE HIM AS A "SUBSTITUTE"
IS WHAT YOU SAID, FOR THE SAKE OF CONTINUING THE KUZE HOUSE
THAT'S RIGHT
step

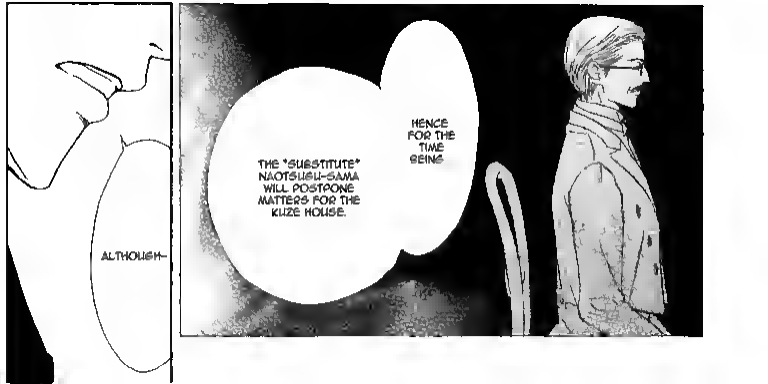
HE HAS ONLY 5 YEARS LEFT

THAT THOUGHT HASN'T CHANGED EVEN NOW
BECAUSE HE IS SOMEONE WHO HAS THE GENUINE KUZE BLOOD UNLIKE ME
HOWEVER HIS CHARACTER HAS BARELY ANY OF THE CAPABILITIES NEEDED OF A HEAD OF A FAMILY


MARQUESS YOUR EXCELLENCY
ACCORDING TO A DOCTOR IN THE AREA. NAOTSUGU-SAMA HAS FREQUENT ATTACKS OF FEVER
BY HIS DIAGNOSIS-

MARQUESS YOUR EXCELLENCY
WHAT...

THE CASE OF AKIHITO-SAMA'S RETIREMENT HAS ALREADY REACHED THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT
UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW TO UNDERMINE THAT


HENCE FOR THE TIME BEING
THE "SUBSTITUTE" NAOTSUGU-SAMA WILL POSTPONE MATTERS FOR THE KUZE HOUSE.
ALTHOUGH-

ARE YOU AN IDIOT!!
AH...
SUPPOSE THAT BEFORE THOSE 5 YEARS HAD GONE BY,
NAOTSUGU-SAN PASSED AWAY?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING BEFORE!!
RETIRING FAMILY HEADSHIP ONCE IS THE END, TO DO SO A SECOND TIME WITH THE SAME FAMILY NAME IS-
THAT IS WHY!
I'M PLEADING THAT YOU WILL DEAL WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT THAT IS WITHOUT SET PRECEDENT!
AFTER NAOTSUGU-SAMA AKIHITO-SAMA WILL---
ONCE MORE SUCCEED TO THE RANK OF "EARL KUZE HOUSE", IN ORDER FOR THAT TO HAPPEN YOU MUST REVISE THE PEERAGE ORDER, THIS IS WHAT I'M ASKING

AB... ABSURD.
THAT'S WHAT YOU ALL ARE...
HOW COULD YOU THAT KIND OF..
WHY WOULD YOU GO SO FAR?

IT'S FOR THE KUZE HOUSE
SO THAT ALL THE MONTHS AND YEARS THAT I USED FOR YOUR EXCELLENCY CAN BE DEVOTED TO THE KUZE HOUSE AND...

TO AKIHITO-SAMA
years and the weight of resolution to—!?
Chara セレクション
To be continued